



# City of Greensboro

## NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **HEATING and HOME FIRE SAFETY**

With the forecasted lows this week predicted to drop into the mid-forties, folks will surely be turning on their furnaces to knock off the chill. Forecasted also is the increase in the cost of heating your home this winter. In an effort to heat the house and save on fuel cost we believe citizens will resort to alternative fuel sources whenever possible. The Greensboro Fire Department urges citizens to exercise caution when using these alternative sources and exercise due caution.

In 2002 (the latest year available) there were over 45,000 heating fires reported in the United States that caused 220 deaths, 990 injuries and approximately \$449 million dollars in property damage.

More than one-third of Americans use fireplaces, wood stoves and other fuel-fired appliances as primary heat sources in their homes. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the fire risks when heating with wood, other solid fuels or space heaters. Most fireplace and chimney fires are caused by creosote build-up. The leading cause of space heater related fires are combustibles too close to the heaters. Central heating fires are due primarily to mechanical malfunctions.

To help insure a warm and safe heating season we suggest/recommend the following:

## **Fireplaces and Wood Stoves**

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a specialist.
- Gas burning fireplaces should be cleaned of soot and residue at least annually.
- Clear the area around the hearth of debris, decorations and flammable materials.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces. Leave glass doors open while burning a fire.
- Never use flammable or combustible liquids to start a fire.
- Dispose of cooled ashes in a sealed metal container outside your house.

## **Space Heaters**

- When buying a space heater, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory such as U.L.
- Make sure it has a thermostat control, and will turn off automatically if the heater turns over.
- Do not attempt to dry clothes on a space heater.
- Space heaters need space! Keep combustible material at least three-foot away from the heater.
- Do not operate a space heater with an extension cord and turn it off when not in use.

## **Kerosene Heaters**

- Buy only U.L. approved kerosene heaters.

- Never fuel your kerosene heater with gasoline or camp stove fuel. **ONLY** use K-1 Kerosene.
- Only use a kerosene heater in a well ventilated area.

### **Protect Yourself and the Inside of Your Home**

- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.
- Check the batteries in your existing smoke alarms and CO detectors and replace them if faulty.
- Prepare and practice a home fire exit drill.

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